Employment: activities of research, cooperation, analysis and action. Action ESSEN 1996-2001

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The Commission is required to draw up this interim report on analysis and research in the employment field pursuant to the requirements of Council Decision 98/171/EC. A full evaluation of the programme can only be available when some of the major studies are completed during 2001 and in early 2002. The report gives details of studies and activities which have been launched under the broad headings of statistics related work, analysis, observation and transfer of good practice and mainstreaming of employment. Some preliminary conclusions can be drawn. With regard to statistics related activity, financial support for Eurostat has led to improvements in the monitoring systems in the employment field. Improvements are expected when the continuous labour force survey comes into effect in all the Member States, a development for which this programme has done a great deal of preparatory work. On the observation and transfer of good practice, the introduction of the Peer Review process and cross-country studies have been very important to the development of the Employment Guidelines. The joint project between DG EMPL, Eurostat and the OECD to develop monitoring systems for the guidelines has begun to produce useful results. It is clear that such a programme of activities needs adequate in-house resources, particularly in order to exploit project results and draw policy conclusions.